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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This case has been carefully reviewed and analyzed, and reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. 112

Claims 1-6 were originally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The Examiner stated that the claims 1-6 recite the limitation "the main pipe", and there is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Responsive to this, the applicant submits that the term "a main pipe" is recited on claim 1, through lines 3 and 4 to form an antecedent basis of the limitation of "the main pipe". Therefore, it is believed that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph should be removed.

CLAIM REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claim 1 was originally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kent (US2005/0016354) in view of Laio (US2004/0237755).

However, the Examiner has pointed out that claims 2-6 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Responsive to this, claim 2 is deleted, and claim 1 is amended which is substantially the combination of original claims 1 and 2 so as to make the claimed invention more distinguishably patentable over the prior art references cited by the Examiner. In addition, claim 3 is amended to form an independent claim which is substantially the combination of original claims 1 and 3 so as to make the claimed invention more distinguishably patentable over the prior art references cited by the Examiner. In addition, claim 4 is amended to form an independent claim which is

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substantially the combination of original claims 1 and 4 so as to make the claimed invention more distinguishably patentable over the prior art references cited by the Examiner.

Accordingly, by the amendments, it is believed that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should be withdrawn, and the claims 1 and 3-6 should be allowable.

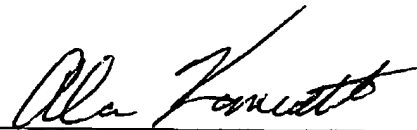
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that the application is now in a condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. If any points remain in issue, which the Examiner feels could best be resolved by either a personal or a telephone interview, he is urged to contact Applicant's attorney at the exchange listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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